

BIBLE CLASS STUDY GUIDE

LEVITICUS 26

OBEDIENCE AND DISOBEDIENCE

The LORD is serious about sin and its consequences, and disobedience to God is not something to be taken lightly. Chapter 26 made this clear to the Israelites and makes it clear to us.

When God and His word are followed, the consequences are blessing. When God is not followed, the results can be disastrous. Lev 26:1-2, “Do not make idols or set up an image or a sacred stone for yourselves, and do not place a carved stone in your land to bow down before it. I am the LORD your God. Observe my Sabbaths and have reverence for my sanctuary. I am the LORD.”

The blessings and curses for the Israelites according to this chapter can be outlined thus:

<u>BLESSINGS</u> (vv3-13))	Providence (rain and good harvest)
)	Preservation (from animals, enemies, and famine)
)	Presence (He would be their God)
<u>CURSES</u> (vv14-39))	Weakness (illness, famine, defeat)
)	Weather (drought and poor harvest)
)	Wild Animals (to harm children and cattle)
)	War (leading to plagues and famine, cannibalism and exile)

Leviticus 26:3-13

Blessings

Rain had to come at the proper times in order for the harvests to be successful. If the rains came too early or too late, the crops would fail. The LORD would provide rain and bountiful crops if the people would not stand in the way of the blessings He wanted to give to them by turning away from Him. When they put the LORD first, they would have no worries about daily life (See Mt 6:33).

The LORD also wanted to bless His people by preserving them from harm. As they would move into the Land of Canaan, they would be fighting and trying to displace those who were already living there. The LORD would help them win the battles they needed to win, but if they rejected His help, they would be lost. He would also seek to preserve them from wild animals who could attack and harm them. Finally, there was preservation from famine. Those who stuck with the LORD would have food to eat in abundance.

The greatest blessing was the last one (vv11-12). *I will put my dwelling place among you.* The people could turn from God, but He would not turn from them. He wanted to make His dwelling among them.

- ! What blessings might come to the Israelites by having God's special presence with them all the time?
- ! What is the promise of Jesus in Matthew 28:20? What blessings might come to us because of this promise?
- ! The *People's Bible* points out that the book of Ezekiel uses language similar to this section of Leviticus in describing the coming of King David who would bring peace and protection to the people. In a wider sense, David was a foreshadowing of Jesus, the Great Shepherd, who would bring peace and protection (especially spiritual) to us. Read Eze 34:23-31.

Leviticus 26:14-39

Curses and Sorrows

Things would not go well with the people if they turned away from the LORD. This only makes sense. If we walk away from the One who provides, guides, and cares for all our needs, where else are we going to get those blessings? A natural consequence of leaving God is leaving His blessings.

In rejecting the LORD and being hostile to Him, the Israelites would experience illness, famine, war, defeat, affliction, cannibalism, idolatry, ruin, and scattering (vv21-35). Those who made it through these sorrows would be left so fearful as to be unable to function.

- ! Even today, the LORD can allow things like these to come on those who have turned away from Him and removed themselves from His blessings. Because of sin these wicked results can come.
- ! Think about the difference between the *consequences (or results) of sin* and the *punishment for sin*. Does this help you answer the question, "Why does a good God let bad things happen?"
- ! There are hints in these verses that the Israelites *will* turn away from God. Indeed they did and terrible things happened to them.
- ! Notice how God also indicates that He will try to turn them from their sins and save them by allowing the consequences of their sins to become obvious (vv23, 27).

Leviticus 26:40-46

The LORD's Faithfulness

The LORD is merciful and gracious. For those Israelites who confessed their sins and turned to Him for forgiveness, there was salvation. God even indicated that no matter how bad things got, He would not wipe them out completely—Jesus would still come to them.